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UNCLAS ADANA 000016

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR JANUARY 14, 2005

1. This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for January 14, 2005. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

2. CUMHURIYET / EVRENSEL: The Liman-Is (Union of Ports) issued a written report to protest the privatization of the TCDD's (Turkish State Railways) ports and criticized the transferring of some of the port ownerships without conducting the usual contract awarding processes.

3. CUMHURIYET / EVRENSEL: After criticizing the Turkish Parliament's ratification of the transfer of the SSK (Social Security Authority) Hospitals, the Unions in Diyarbakir now react sharply against the (Turkish) GoT's decision to close down the General Directorate of the Village Services. Mehmet Demircan, the Branch Secretary of the Yapi-Yol Sen (Union of Construction and Road Works) stated that fifty thousand workers and civil servants will be rendered unemployed with the closing of the Village Services Offices.

4. HURRIYET (CUKUROVA) / VAKIT / BOLGE: Turkey and Russia discussed ways to transport Russian oil and natural gas through pipelines from Samsun (Turkey's Black Sea Coast) to the Mediterranean port of Ceyhan (in Adana province). Under this project, a terminal for liquidated natural gas may also be set up in Ceyhan. It is highly likely that Ceyhan is going to be the center for natural gas and oil delivery, since Azerbaijani oil, through Baku-Tiflis-Ceyhan pipeline, is also going to be delivered from Ceyhan to the world markets.

5. YENI SAFAK / SABAH / MILLIYET / HURRIYET / ZAMAN / CUMHURIYET / OZGUR GUNDEM: Mehmet Fidanci (allegedly an executioner of Hizbullah terrorist organization), to whom a legal action was brought against for killing Ali Gaffar Okkan (Diyarbakir Security Director) and five policemen in January 24, 2001, is sentenced to life in prison by the Diyarbakir Criminal Court.

6. OZGUR GUNDEM: 3400 students of 144 villages in Kiziltepe are not being transported to schools due to a failure of the (Turkish) Ministry of Education's "transportation system" project. The Ministry has not paid the amount due in 2004 to the contractors. Hence, the contractors are unable to pay the wages of the drivers who had been carrying the students to their schools.

7. OZGUR GUNDEM: Bilal Cosalev (17) allegedly committed suicide in the Erzurum (E-Type) Prison on December 17, 2004; however, his death was reported to his family fourteen days later. This delay raised suspicions about the death of Cosalev. Then, Cosalev's family filed a complaint to the Kars Prosecutor and claimed that the prison officers killed their son.

8. EVRENSEL: The workers of TEKEL (State Cigarette Factory) and their families held a demonstration in Adana and Malatya to protest and to stop the TEKEL's privatization process.

9. EVRENSEL: Despite the presence of allegations that the Bolu Commando Brigade and the village guards burnt down many villages in Lice, Diyarbakir and killed six villagers in Kutlu village of Lice in 1994, the cases are no longer put on trial (except for the European Court of Human Rights following up the case of six villagers) on Turkish Courts thanks to the statute of limitations.

10. MILLIYET: Arif Sakik, a captive held in prison for being a member of the terrorist organization, namely the PKK, was asked for his statement about the mass graves discovered in Kulp, Diyarbakir. Sakik stated that the eleven people found in the grave might be the ones that PKK executed on the grounds that eleven people were "operatives/agents". Sakik said that if the bones were discovered under a walnut tree, then those people are the ones killed by the PKK.